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THE NEW AVENGERS

THE TRUST
PART ONE

PREVIOUSLY...

The Civil War has ended and the Avengers are no more. Luke Cage, Spider-Man, Wolverine and Spider-Woman have gone underground rather than register their identities with the government. Together with Clint Barton--now wearing the costume of Ronin--Doctor Strange and Iron Fist, they have traveled to Japan to rescue Maya Lopez, the deaf woman also known as Echo, from the band of assassins known as the Hand.

When Elektra, the Hand's leader, is killed in battle, her body reverts to its true form: that of a Skrull, a shape-shifting alien.

Meanwhile, in New York City, Iron Man and the Mighty Avengers are fighting a newly-powered Ultron, who has taken control of the world's weather patterns and set off an EMP attack which has cut off all types of power.

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RAND CORPORATE JET, EN ROUTE TO THE UNITED STATES.
KRAKOOM
RRRUUMMMMMMMBBBLLEEEE
SO NO ONE IS GOING TO TALK?

OKAY, I'LL TALK.
ELEKTRA'S A SKRULL.
A SHAPE-SHIFTING ALIEN SKRULL WAS LEADING THE HAND.
THE LARGEST GROUP OF ASSASSINS IN THE WORLD HAD TAKEN OVER THE JAPANESE UNDERWORLD AND THEY WERE BEING LED BY A SKRULL.
SO WHY WOULD AN ALIEN TRAVEL MILLIONS OF LIGHT YEARS, ACROSS GALAXIES AND THE MILKY WAY AND THROUGH WHAT I ASSUME IS HELLISH TRAFFIC THE ENTIRE TIME TO DO THIS?
JUST SO SHE COULD GET FREE YABISOBA NOODLES WHENEVER SHE WANTS?
SERIOUSLY, NO ONE FEELS LIKE TALKING ABOUT THIS?
WOW.
NO ONE IS TALKING BECAUSE NO ONE TRUSTS EACH OTHER ANYMORE.
BECAUSE ELEKTRA IS A SKRULL?
BECAUSE ANY ONE OF US COULD BE A SKRULL.

I'M NOT A SKRULL.

OKAY, ANYBODY BUT YOU. BUT THE REST OF US, ANY OF US COULD BE A SKRULL.
GREEN ELEKTRA DIDN'T COME HERE AN' SET UP SHOP BY HERSELF...
SHE'S PART OF A PLAN.

AND IF THEY INFILTRATED THE HAND, THE MOST RUTHLESS, CUNNING, DARING ASSASSINS IN THE WORLD...
IF SHE COULD GET HER SHAPE-SHIFTING ALIEN-NESS PAST MY VERY ACUTE MUTANT SENSES...

...THEN THEY COULD HAVE INFILTRATED S.H.I.E.L.D., HYDRA, THE AVENGERS, THE WHITE HOUSE, THE X-MEN...
DON'T SAY THE SECRET DEFENDERS. PLEASE NOT THE SECRET DEFENDERS!
RRRUUMMMMMMMBBBLLLEEEE

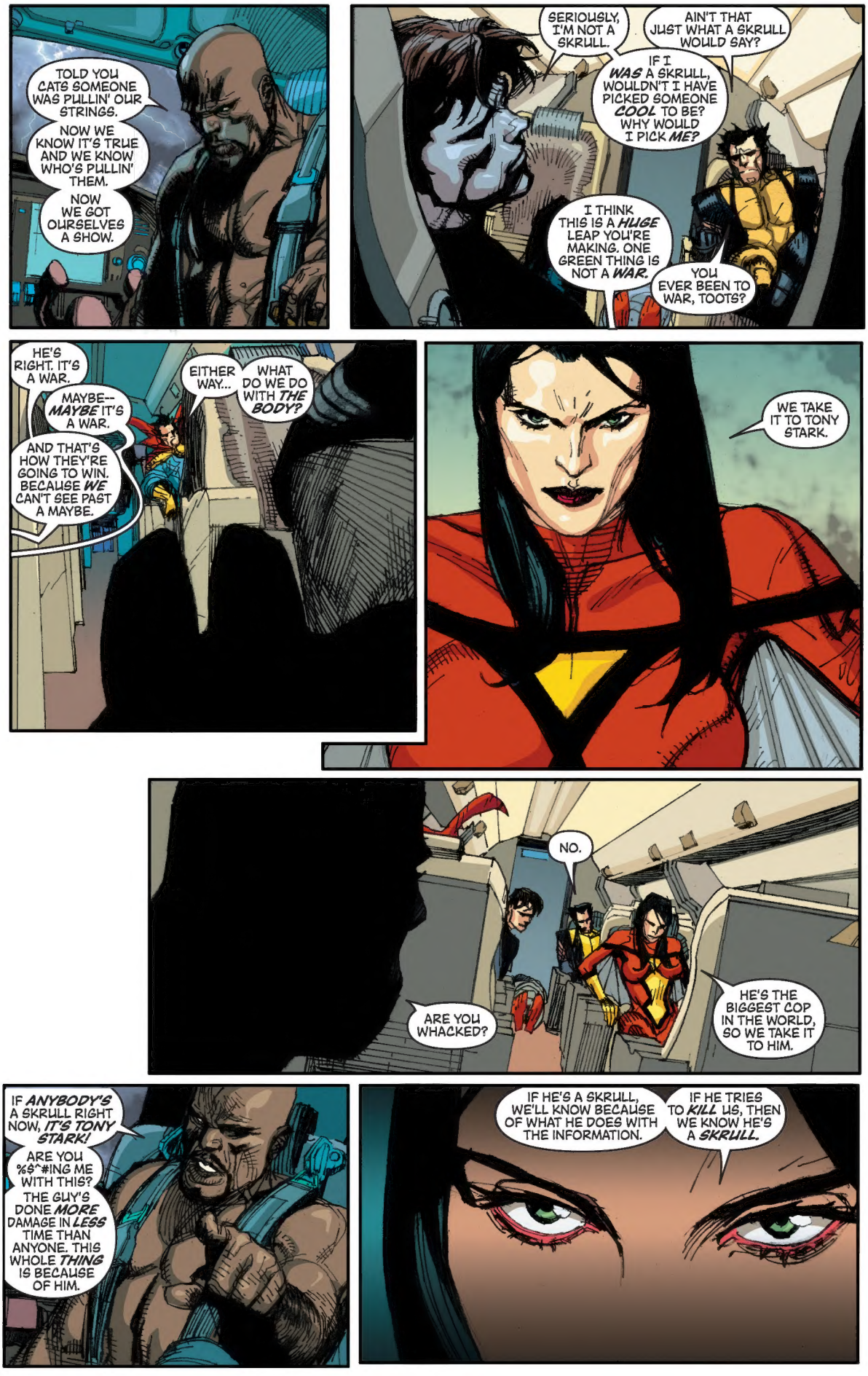
YOU'RE MAKING JOKES?
OR I COULD CRY, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DO?
SHALL WE PUT IT TO A VOTE?

AND IF ANY OF THAT IS TRUE... THAT IS A WARTIME PLAN. AN INVASION PLAN.
AND NO ONE IS TALKING BECAUSE NO ONE ON THIS PLANE IS COMPLETELY SURE THAT EVERYONE ON THIS PLANE IS EXACTLY WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE.
INCLUDING YOU.

INCLUDING ME. SURE.
BUT LET'S LOOK AROUND THE PLANE, SHALL WE...?

WELL, WE HAVE CLINT BARTON--HAWKEYE--BACK FROM THE DEAD AND ALL DOLLED UP AS THE NINJA OF THE 21ST CENTURY...
WHERE YOU BEEN THE LAST FEW MONTHS? DON'T *FEEL* LIKE SHARING?
DEAD, ALIVE, DEAD, ALIVE. AND HERE YOU ARE, NO BOW AND ARROW...AND WITH *US* INSTEAD OF YOUR OLD AVENGERS FRIENDS...
WELL, THAT'S NOT SUSPICIOUS *AT ALL.*
AND JESSICA DREW, THE WOMAN OF A THOUSAND ALLEGIANCES.
WHO'D YOUR DADDY WORK FOR? *WHERE* WERE YOU BEFORE THE NEW AVENGERS GOT TOGETHER? S.H.I.E.L.D.? HYDRA?
HEY, WHERE'S *NICK FURY,* JESS?
ECHO, KINGPIN'S ASSASSIN, IS NOW, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE SCOURGE OF THE UNDERWORLD.
THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE THAT VOUCHED FOR YOU WERE CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT HE'S DEAD...
...AND MATT MURDOCK, AND HE'S... WHEREVER HE IS.
AND *WHY* IS CAPTAIN AMERICA DEAD?
BECAUSE ALL THE SUPER HEROES IN THE WORLD HAVE SPENT THE SUMMER BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER.
AND LET ME ASK YOU, PETER PARKER--
--THE MAN WHO SPENT EVERY SINGLE SECOND OF HIS ADULT LIFE TRYING TO PROTECT HIS IDENTITY AS SPIDER-MAN FROM THE WORLD--
--WHO JUST WENT AND TOLD THE WORLD HE WAS SPIDER-MAN AND ESCALATED THE WAR--
--HEY, PETE, WHO BENEFITED THE MOST BY YOU DOING THAT?

AND LUKE CAGE...
YEAH?
WHO USED TO BE A SATIN-SHIRT, METAL-TIARA-WEARING HERO FOR HIRE...
...BUT NOW HE WENT AND TURNED HIMSELF INTO A HUSBAND AND FATHER AND LEADER OF A SUPER-TEAM THAT YEARS AGO HE WOULDN'T BE FOUND DEAD ON.
AND NOW HE RARELY SPEAKS TO HIS SO-CALLED EX-PARTNER IRON FIST, WHO ALL OF A SUDDEN HAS A PLANE.
I DIDN'T ALL OF A SUDDEN GET A PLANE.
AND DOCTOR STRANGE, NOTHING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT YOU...
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS. WHERE WERE YOU DURING THE CIVIL WAR?
AND WHERE WERE YOU?
EXACTLY! AND THEN THERE'S ME!
WHO IS EVERYWHERE AT ONCE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN KNOWS EXACTLY WHO HE IS.
RRRUUMMMMMMBBBLLEEEEE
AND WHAT ARE YOU SMILING ABOUT?


TOLD YOU CATS SOMEONE WAS PULLIN' OUR STRINGS.
NOW WE KNOW IT'S TRUE AND WE KNOW WHO'S PULLIN' THEM.
NOW WE GOT OURSELVES A SHOW.
SERIOUSLY, I'M NOT A SKRULL.
AIN'T THAT JUST WHAT A SKRULL WOULD SAY?
IF I *WAS* A SKRULL, WOULDN'T I HAVE PICKED SOMEONE *COOL* TO BE? WHY WOULD I PICK *ME?*
I THINK THIS IS A *HUGE* LEAP YOU'RE MAKING. ONE GREEN THING IS NOT A *WAR.*
YOU EVER BEEN TO WAR, TOOTS?
HE'S RIGHT. IT'S A WAR.
MAYBE--*MAYBE* IT'S A WAR.
AND THAT'S HOW THEY'RE GOING TO WIN. BECAUSE *WE* CAN'T SEE PAST A MAYBE.
EITHER WAY...
WHAT DO WE DO WITH *THE BODY?*
WE TAKE IT TO TONY STARK.
NO.
ARE YOU WHACKED?
HE'S THE BIGGEST COP IN THE WORLD, SO WE TAKE IT TO HIM.
IF *ANYBODY'S* A SKRULL RIGHT NOW, *IT'S TONY STARK!*
ARE YOU %$^#ING ME WITH THIS?
THE GUY'S DONE *MORE* DAMAGE IN *LESS* TIME THAN ANYONE. THIS WHOLE *THING* IS BECAUSE OF HIM.
IF HE'S A SKRULL, WE'LL KNOW BECAUSE OF WHAT HE DOES WITH THE INFORMATION.
IF HE TRIES TO *KILL* US, THEN WE KNOW HE'S A *SKRULL.*

YEAH, THERE'S A PLAN.

WE TAKE IT TO THE MEDIA.
NO.
LISTEN TO ME, I KNOW A REPORTER WHO IS SO NOT A SKRULL IT'S NOT EVEN FUNNY. WE GO PUBLIC WITH IT.
NO.
IT PROTECTS--
RRRUUMMMMMMMBBBLLLEEEE

PEOPLE WILL--FIRST OF ALL, THEY WON'T PUBLISH IT.
THEY'LL PUBLISH A STORY ABOUT HOW INSANE YOU ARE FOR TELLING THEM TO PUBLISH IT.
AND THEN THEY WILL DO WHAT THEY ALWAYS DO.

MOCK YOU.
YES.
HOW WILL THEY--?
LISTEN, WHEN ALIENS FIRST LANDED ON EARTH IN THE THIRTIES--
AREA FIFTY-ONE.

YES, THE GOVERNMENT SPENT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS--NOT DENYING IT, BUT MOCKING THE PEOPLE WHO WENT PUBLIC.
THE GOOGLY-EYED ALIEN CREATURE DRAWINGS YOU ALWAYS SEE. THOSE WERE YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK.
YOU GO PUBLIC, IT MAKES YOU NOT ONLY THE "WANTED CRIMINAL AGAINST THE STATE" THAT YOU ALREADY ARE, IT'LL MAKE YOU A MOCKERY.
AND FOR SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN BEAT UP BY THE MEDIA AS OFTEN AND AS FIERCELY AS YOU HAVE, I CAN'T BELIEVE GOING TO THEM FOR HELP IS EVEN AN OPTION TO YOU.

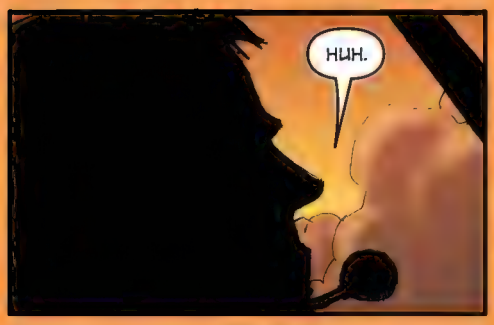
WAS THAT SKRULLY OF ME?
TONY STARK IS A SKRULL. I CAN SEE THAT. THAT I CAN SEE.
WHO ELSE HAS BEEN SKRULLISH LATELY?
WELL, WHO BROUGHT THE SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT TO CONGRESS?
WHO WAS THE PERSON WHO ACTUALLY DRAFTED THE BILL?

I DON'T KNOW.
WELL, THEY'RE A SKRULL.
AND MAYBE THE PRESIDENT.
MAYBE.
MAN! ARE YOU PURPOSEFULLY HITTING EVERY CLOUD FROM JAPAN TO NEW YORK?
RRRUUMMMMMMBBBULLEEEE
WE GO TO TONY.
NO.
WHAT?
I'M TELLING YOU, IF TONY IS A SKRULL, THEN THEY KNOW WE KNOW.
GET IT?
THEY KNOW WE HAVE HER AND THEY KNOW WE KNOW. SO WE GIVE HER UP AND SEE WHAT THEY DO.
WHAT DO THEY WANT? THE SKRULLS.

THEY WANT OUR PLANET. THEY HAVE NO PLANET AND THEY NEED OURS.
I'VE NEVER SEEN AN ALIEN BEFORE.
AND YOU'VE NEVER BEEN DEAD BEFORE. YOU'RE HAVING A REAL RENAISSANCE THIS WEEK.
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE SKRULLS WANT US EXTERMINATED, AS A POINT OF CULTURAL PRIDE.

THEY *TRIED* TO WHACK US BEFORE AND THEY *FAILED.*
THEY ARE A PROUD, WARRIOR RACE ON A LEVEL THAT WE, *EVEN* US, CAN'T WRAP OUR HEADS AROUND...
...AND THEY HAVE LOST THIS PLANET TO US, TO THE KREE, TO THE INHUMANS...
THEY HAVE FOUGHT HARD TO GET THEIR LITTLE MITTS ON THIS PLANET AND THEY HAVE *ALWAYS* LOST.
AND MAYBE-- I DON'T KNOW-- MAYBE THIS IS A REAL PLAN THEY GOT HERE.
AND IF LUKE'S THINKING ON ALL OF THIS IS RIGHT--
--THAT THE SECRET WAR, THE CIVIL WAR, WANDA MAXIMOFF, THE RAFT, ALL OF THIS IS BECAUSE OF *THEM...*
...IF THAT'S *TRUE,* EVEN A LITTLE, EVEN HALF OF IT...
...THEY MAY HAVE *ALREADY* WON.

KRAKABOOM


HUH.

WELL... I'M FREAKING OUT.

GUYS, UH, WE CAN'T LAND IN NEW YORK.
WHY NOT?
THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON WITH THE WEATHER.
NO DUH.
NO, THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON.
WE'LL HAVE TO LAND IN CHICAGO.
VRRRRRR:
VRRRRRR:
UH...
OH, NO...
OH MY GOD...

NO!

OH MY GOD!

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

WE'VE LOST POWER!

WE'RE GOING DOWN! DOCTOR, CAN YOU MAKE THAT NOT HAPPEN?!

IF YOU CAN FLY, FLY OUT OF HERE!
MY CLOAK WON'T WORK UNDER THESE CONDITIONS!
I'M NOT LEAVING!
YOU'RE LEAVING!
EVERYONE GET TO THE BACK OF THE PLANE!
LET ME HELP!
HELP BY GETTING YOUR THREE-HUNDRED-POUND BUTT TO THE BACK OF THE PLANE!
TRY TO BALANCE THE WEIGHT!
WE'RE GOING TO LAND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, LET'S--
NO!
DON'T BE AN IDIOT!
FRARJOOM
NOOO!

VISTANT LUNUNAM STEENAM...
Corporation
I-I-I NEED A GOLF COURSE OR-OR A PARK OR SOMETHING.
BACK OF THE PLANE, LOGAN!
WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WE'RE GOING TO LAND ON PEOPLE!

I DID WHAT I COULD!

DANNY?

I SEE A GOLF COURSE! (OH, PLEASE...)

Rand Corporation

HERE WE GO!

KACHUNK

FRRRTPPP

FRAMBOOM

BOOM

GROOM

RRPPPSSCCREEEE

CRUNCCHH
CLANG
OOF!
ARGH!
CHUCK

RRRG!

DON'T DO IT.
ZRACK
AAGHH!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA--
SMACK
GAH! DAMN THAT--
ZLATCCT.
NNRR!
SORRY.
ZLATCCT

NEXT ISSUE: INVASION